

Secular Charisma, Sacred Power: Rites of Rebellion in the Ghent Entry of 1467

Peter J. ARNADE¹

God and the good city of Ghent
Strike dead all who rule and have collected the *cueilote*,
Let that escape no one's attention.²

Saint Lieven of Houtem, the well known,
He carries his head in his hand,
People walked there with bruises and blisters,
singing, "Sweet Saint Lieven,
Whereto do you want to be carried?"
--"To Houtem, in the little chapel."³

On Sunday morning June 28, 1467, Charles the Bold made his *joyeuse entrée* into Ghent, the Low Countries' largest city, and the gem of the new duke's Burgundian empire. It had been only a week since city governments throughout Flanders had concluded eulogies to mourn the death of Charles' father, Philip the Good. Met outside Ghent's walls by a delegation of town fathers, guild officials and local ecclesiastics, Charles and his retinue entered a city festively bedecked for their arrival.⁴ It was a propitious moment. By this

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² "God ende die goede stede van Ghent, Slaet al doot, dat heeft regiment, Ende, die de kaliote hebben ontfaen, Slaet al doot, laet nyemans ontgaen," in Robert Foncke, *Kaliote af: Komentaar bij een laat-middelnederlands kwatrijn* (Ghent, 1951), pp. 395-96.

³ "Sinte Lieven tHoutem wel bekend, die draegh sijn hoofd al in sijn handt, tvolc liep daer buylen en bleynen, ende lieten haerlien daer seynen sy songen sijn lieven santijn waer wilt ghij zijn ghedragen tHoutem int kappelkijn," a sixteenth-century folk song in J. Maek, "Vlaamsche volksdevotie in een geuzenlied," *Volkskunde* 6 (1946), p. 160.

⁴ The 1467 entry has received the attention of some historians. See J. J. Steyaert, "Oproer te Gent in het jaer 1467," *Belgisch Museum* 7 (1843): 116-79, but replete with mistakes; Victor Fris, *Histoire de Gand* (Brussels, 1913), pp. 138-42 and his "La restriction de Gand (13 juillet, 1468)," *Bulletin*

first major entry into one of his subject cities, Charles formalized the beginning of his reign as count of Flanders, enacting a ceremony that Northern European monarchs had revived and elaborated over the previous century.⁵

The duke's entry followed the standard model in Ghent for the reception of new counts.⁶ First, a party of city officials and clerics led by the abbot of

de la société d'histoire de Gand 30 (1922): 57-142; John Foster Kirk, *History of Charles the Bold*, vol. 1 (London, 1863), pp. 170-82; and most recently, Paul Trio, "Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving: De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, vol. 2 (Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven, 1989), pp. 113-14. The best source for the entry is the account by the Burgundian chronicler Georges Chastellain in his *Oeuvres*, ed. H. Kervyn de Lettenhove, vol. 5 (Brussels, 1866), pp. 249-79; and an eyewitness account by Pieter Van de Letuwe, a magistrate from Ypres, published as "Rapport van den ghenen dat ghedaen ende gheschiet es ten bliden incommene van den grave Kaerle," in J. B. Cannaerd, *Bydragen tot de kennis van het oude strafrecht in Vlaenderen* (Ghent, 1835), pp. 414-20. For other excellent accounts, see *Dagboek van Gent van 1447 tot 1470*, vol. 2 (*Maatschappij der Vlaamsche Bibliophilen*, vol. 4, no. 12), (Ghent, 1904), pp. 205-08; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen van 580 tot 1467*, ed. Ph. Blommaert and C. P. Serrure, vol. 2 (*Maatschappij der Vlaamsche Bibliophilen*, no. 7), (Ghent, n. d.). For less useful accounts see Philippe de Commynes, *Mémoires*, ed. Joseph Calmette, vol. 1. (Paris, 1964), pp. 119-21; and Nicholaes Despars, *Chronijcke van den lande ende graefscpe van Vlaenderen*, ed. J. De Jonghe, vol. 4 (Bruges, 1840), pp. 1-8.

⁵ Late-medieval and renaissance entry ceremonies have received considerable attention. For Northern Europe, see Joséphe Chartrou, *Les entrées solennelles et triomphales à la Renaissance (1484-1551)* (Paris, 1928); Bernard Guenée and Françoise Lehoux, *Les entrées royales françaises de 1328 à 1515* (Paris, 1968); Lawrence Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual and Art in the Renaissance* (Geneva, 1986) and "The Medieval Entry Ceremony at Paris," in *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*, ed. Janos M. Bak (Berkeley, 1990): 88-118; Jean Jacquot and Elie Kongison, ed., *Les fêtes de la Renaissance*, vol. 3 (Paris, 1975); Sidney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford, 1969); Roy Strong, *Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and the Theater of Power* (Boston, 1973). For the Low Countries in particular, see Hugo Soly, "Plechtige intochten in de steden van de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de overgang van middeleeuwen naar nieuwe tijd: communicatie, propaganda, spektakel," *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 97, no. 3 (1984): 341-61; John Landwehr, *Splendid Ceremonies: State Entries and Royal Funerals in the Low Countries, 1515-1791* (Leiden, 1971). For the Burgundian court, see Jesse D. Hurlbut, "Ceremonial Entries in Burgundy: Philip the Good and Charles the Bold (1419-77)," Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation (Indiana University, 1990), without a discussion of the 1467 entry.

⁶ A fifteenth-century cartulary, the *Witteboek*, in the Stadsarchief te Gent (hereafter SAG) 93bis, f. 216r-217r describes the structure of an entry ceremony in Ghent, and the oaths required. Philip Wieland, a celebrated Ghent jurist in the late middle-ages, confirms this structure in his *Recueil des*

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

Ghent's Benedictine monastery of Saint Pieter and by Ghent's spiritual lord, the bishop of Tournai, ushered the new prince into the abbey's church to celebrate mass. At the completion of services, the abbot girded Charles with a sword, and the duke, in turn, swore to uphold the privileges of the monastery's seignery. Next, the ducal party wound its way northward through Ghent's main thoroughfares to the central parish church of Saint Jan, where the duke pledged to respect the city's privileges as its new count. Finally, Charles headed toward the Vrijdagmarkt, Ghent's largest public square, where local citizens promised fealty to him in a rally that concluded the requisite ceremonies. That night Ghent's aldermen and citizens celebrated the new count's accession with a flurry of street celebrations.⁷

Charles' welcome had proceeded smoothly, fulfilling its function as a rite of union between city and prince; it papered over two decades of conflict between Ghent and the Burgundian dukes and fostered an appearance of mutual respect. The following afternoon, however, ducal and city celebrants received a rude shock when hundreds of Ghentenaars, returning in an annual religious procession from the nearby village of Houtem, entered their city. Angered over burdensome taxes and the way city and court leaders had interfered with their sacred festivities, these pilgrims wreaked havoc in central Ghent and rioted on the Vrijdagmarkt. "This is not honorable," commented one Flemish knight to the unruly crowd, "to riot at the duke's entry; the day before to receive him with solemn processions, and now to salute him with iron swords."⁸

The ugly mood in Ghent had much to do with the celebrations for Charles. The Burgundian duke had entered Ghent on the day of the Saint Lieven procession, the city's most popular religious festival. To accommodate the duke, Ghent's aldermen had decided to alter its two-day schedule by insisting that pilgrims make the overnight trip to Houtem a day earlier. By their clumsy meddling with Ghent's liturgical calendar, Charles the Bold and Ghent's leaders had provoked a rebellion which challenged the magnificence of the duke's joyous entry. No princely ritual in the late-medieval Low Countries was as important as the Burgundian public entry

antiquités de Flandre, in *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriae*, ed. J. J. de Smet, vol. 4 (Brussels, 1865), pp. 95-97. See also Gerda Temmerman, "De feestcultuur te Gent in de periode 1515-1608," vol. 1, unpublished M. A. Thesis (Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1981), pp. 1-5.

⁷ Chastellain, *Chronique*, vol. 5, pp. 257-59; Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," pp. 414-16; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, pp. 257-59; *Dagboek van Gent*, vol. 2, p. 205.

⁸ Chastellain, *Mémoires*, vol. 5, p. 264, "Mais n'estoit point leur honnuer, ce disoit, de eux ainsi esmouvoir à sa nouvelle entrée, qui le jour de devant l'avoient reçu à solonnelles processions, et maintenant le venoient saluer à bastons ferrés."

into cities. The Ghentenaars' rebellion thus imperilled the legitimacy of a central state ceremony and, as a consequence, threatened Charles the Bold's public claim to uncontested sovereignty.

Contemporary historians of late-medieval culture have often underplayed civic culture in their fascination with court ritual.⁹ This paper studies the public entry from the perspective of its urban hosts, where it appears a dynamic and problematic ritual rather than a seamless cultural representation. The public entry was one of Burgundy's most crucial ceremonies; it aimed to create a fiction of political unity between subjects and sovereigns. But because the entry depended upon an audience, diverse in its composition, the unity it invoked was fragile--and artificial. In this paper I sketch how the audience triumphed in 1467, and ask why two ritual and political agendas collided. I show that Ghentenaars challenged the duke's claim to power by rallying around a competing source of local authority: the relics of Saint Lieven, a source of authority court and city officials had tried to displace. Finally, I explore how court officials insisted on reclaiming the honor rebellious citizens had impugned with a host of ritual measures to punish Ghent. The contours of this sequence of topsy-turvy events allow us to peer inside the social and political dynamic of ceremony while it is enacted, and suggest that entry rituals, far from static, could serve as forums for dissent.

Burgundian Entries

Philip the Good and Charles the Bold, the two dukes whose reigns created a Burgundian empire in the Low Countries, promoted public entries into their territories' urbanized north with an ambitious schedule of activity. From 1419 to 1477, the Burgundian dukes, duchesses and their children made at least 150 ceremonial entries into their French, Flemish and Dutch cities.¹⁰ They elaborated what had once been a smaller affair into a full-fledged spectacle that left one observer at Arras in 1455 wondering, "that if God had descended from Heaven I do not know if the citizens would have paid him this

⁹ For Burgundy, the classic examples are Johan Huizinga, *Herfsttij der middeleeuwen: studie over levens- en gedachtenvormen der veertiende en vijftiende eeuwen in Frankrijk en de Nederlanden* (Groningen, 1986; orig. 1919), who summarizes Netherlandic culture without reference to its urban landscape, and Otto Cartellieri, *Am Hofe der Herzöge von Burgund* (Basel, 1926).

¹⁰ The entry figure is from Hurlbut, "Ceremonial Entries," appendix 1; Hurlbut has revised the original figure of 132. See also the earlier calculation, and overview, in Josette Britte-Ashford, "Recherches préliminaires sur le théâtre au quinzième siècle à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne de la seconde race," Unpublished M. A. Thesis (Brigham Young University, 1970), pp. 86-115.

RITES OF REBELLION IN THE GHENT ENTRY OF 1467

much honor."¹¹ In 1405, when duke John the Fearless made his joyous entry into Ghent, local citizens presented the new count with a host of economic and political complaints in a modest ceremony that was scarcely memorable. In 1458, when his son Philip the Good made a triumphal entry, the Ghenteners staged celebrations that astonished contemporary observers. Eagerly compliant, townspeople flattered the duke with a strong show of support that drew on every theatrical prop, including classical and biblical allusions, to celebrate his authority.¹² It was a striking contrast to previous Ghent receptions honoring Burgundian dukes, but it also set a new standard for future entries. Street theater, *tableaux vivants*, music, and banquets which lauded sovereign power grew more central to Low Country entry ceremonies.

The dramatic increase in urban ceremony during public entries in the Burgundian Netherlands was part of a larger trend by Northern European monarchies, particularly by the French crown, to glorify, indeed to sacralize, sovereign entries. The growing frequency of entry ceremonies and their more complicated trappings demonstrate a renewed interest among court officials in the triumphal entries of Imperial Rome. Indeed, this nostalgia for classical ceremony marked a calculated attempt to forge more powerful public symbols of monarchical authority in an era of burgeoning state power.¹³

But if entries in Northern Europe became increasingly centered on the ruler's magnificence, no amount of elaboration obscured the fact that these ceremonies were corporate in nature. The entry served as a public vehicle, developed out of a feudal model, whereby both sovereign and citizens

¹¹ Jacques DuClercq, quoted in Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 3, p. 35, n. 1.

¹² On the 1405 entry, see Ph. Blommaert, "Inhuldiging van Jan Zonder Vrees als Graef van Vlaenderen, te Gent in het jaer 1405," *Belgisch Museum* 1 (1837): 83-98. For the best description of the 1458 entry, see *Kronyk Van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, pp. 212-55. See also Elizabeth Dhanens' excellent discussion, focusing on literary and art-historical themes, "De Blijde Inkomst van Filips de Goede in 1458 en de plastische kunsten te Gent," *Actum Gandavi: Zeven bijdragen in verband met de Oude Kunst te Gent (Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen van België, Klasse der Schone Kunsten*, vol. 48, no. 2), (Brussels, 1987): 53-89.

¹³ Guenée, Lehoux, *Les entrées royales*, pp. 1-17; Bryant, *The King and the City*, pp. 22-64. On the classical period, see Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986), and Sabine G. McCormick, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1981). For similar trends in Italian cities in the late-fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see Bonner Mitchell, *The Majesty of the State: Triumphal Progresses of Foreign Sovereigns in Renaissance Italy (1494-1600)* (Bibliotheca dell' "Archivum Romanicum," no. 203), (Florence, 1986). For a detailed consideration of entry ceremonies in late-medieval Florence, see Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1980), pp. 295-330.

publically confirmed their privileges and duties with an exchange of rights.¹⁴ Nowhere was this more true than in fifteenth-century Flanders, where the duke of Burgundy ruled as count, and where his ambitious policy of centralization confronted considerable urban resistance.¹⁵

Of all the Flemish cities, Ghent posed the greatest challenge to the Burgundian court. It was a textile and trade city in the hands of a political alliance of old and new wealth. By the late fourteenth century, Ghent's medieval patricians had joined an alliance of weavers and representatives of the fifty-three smaller guilds to gain control of the city's economic and political structures.¹⁶ Throughout much of the Burgundian period, this so-called regime of the Three Members fought to retain its considerable local autonomy and its hegemony over Eastern Flanders with mixed success.¹⁷ Ghent's civic culture bore the stamp of this powerful burgher regime which was little prepared to accommodate the pretensions of the Burgundian court.¹⁸

¹⁴ Bryant, *The King and the City*, pp. 21-42; Elie Konigson, "La cité et le prince: premières entrées de Charles VII," *Fêtes de la Renaissance*, vol. 3: 55-69.

¹⁵ For the role of Flanders in the Burgundian empire, see Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, *De Bourgondische Nederlanden* (Antwerp, 1985), and their *In de Ban van Bourgondië* (Houten, 1988).

¹⁶ On late-medieval Ghent, see Marc Boone and Walter Prevenier, "De stadstaat'-droom," in *Gent: Apologie van een rebelse stad*, ed. Johan Decavele (Antwerp, 1989): 61-105; Victor Fris, *Histoire de Gand* (Brussels, 1913), esp. pp. 59-104; Hans Van Werveke, *Gand: esquisse d'histoire sociale* (Brussels, 1946). Five recent studies have transformed our understanding of the city's economic and political life. On fourteenth-century Ghent, see David Nicholas, *The Metamorphosis of a Medieval City: Ghent in the Age of the Artevelde, 1302-1390* (Lincoln, 1987); *The Domestic Life of a Medieval City: Women, Children and the Family in Fourteenth-Century Ghent* (Lincoln, 1985); and *The van Artevelde of Ghent: The Varieties of Vendetta and the Hero in History* (Ithaca, 1988). On fifteenth-century Ghent, see Marc Boone, *Gent en de Bourgondische hertogen ca. 1384-ca. 1453: een sociaal-politieke studie van een staatsvormingsproces* (*Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren*, vol. 52, no. 133), (Brussels, 1990); and *Geld en macht: De Gentse stadsfinanciën en de Bourgondische staatsvorming (1384-1453)* (*Verhandelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent*, vol. 15), (Ghent, 1990).

¹⁷ A close examination of the distribution of Ghent's aldermen's seats during the fifteenth century reveals that after 1453 candidates more sympathetic to the court's ambitions were successfully elected. Big patrician families nonetheless prevailed throughout the century, despite their numerical disadvantages. See W. P. Blockmans, "Het Wisselingproces van de Gentse schepenen tijdens de 15de eeuw," *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* 41 (1987): 75-96.

¹⁸ The ritual interaction between fifteenth-century Ghent and the Burgundian court is the focus of my dissertation, *Citizens, Sovereigns and*

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

Public ritual in fifteenth-century Ghent consequently articulated a political tension between increased ducal power and an urban insistence upon local rights and privileges. This interplay reached a crescendo in the decades preceding Charles' ill-conceived entry in 1467. Between 1451-53, Ghent, ruled by a regime of captains, fought a bloody war against Burgundian leaders, and legitimated this confrontation through a deft manipulation of written and visual displays of local authority. Rebellious citizens, guildsmen in particular, rallied regularly on Ghent's Vrijdagmarkt, displaying charters of liberties and unfurling guild banners to express group solidarity and local power.¹⁹

Ritual Behavior: Ghent and the Burgundian Court, 1440-1500, State University of New York at Binghamton, under the direction of Dr. Richard C. Trexler. Ghent's festive life has never been fully studied, but for an introduction and overview see Gerda Temmerman's unpublished "De feestcultuur te Gent"; Frans De Potter, "Schets eener geschiedenis der gemeentefeesten in Vlaenderen," *Annales de la société des beaux-arts* 12 (1870): 41-188; the uneven references to festivals in his eight volume *Gent van den oudsten tijt tot heden* (Ghent, 1883-1901); and Raymond Van Utyven, "Volksvermaak en feestvieren in de steden," *Spiegel Historiae* 18 (1983): 551-61. Paul Trio's catalogue of Ghent's church and parish processions based on ecclesiastical account books can be found in his "Volksreligie," vol. 2. Jacques Toussaert's *Le sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du moyen âge* (Paris, 1963) discusses Flemish processions, pp. 246-67 while Katheline Geerts, *De spelende mens in de Bourgondische Nederlanden* (Bruges, 1987) summarizes gaming behavior. On the festive culture of Southern Netherlandic cities, see *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis*, 68 (1984) for Brabant, particularly M. Soenen's "Fêtes et cérémonies publiques à Bruxelles aux temps moderne," pp. 47-100 and E. Van Autenboer, "Cultuur als element van de public relations te Mechelen en Turnhout in de 15de en 16de eeuw," pp. 183-202. For a general overview of the changes in festive structures for the Southern Netherlands from the early modern to the modern period, see Hugo Soly, "Openbare feesten in Brabantse en Vlaamse steden, 16de-18de eeuw," *L'Initiative publique des communes en Belgique. Fondements historiques (Ancien Régime). 11e Colloque international. Actes/ Het openbaar initiatief van de gemeenten in België. Historische grondslagen (Ancien Regime). 11de Internationaal Colloquium, Handelingen* (Crédit communal de Belgique, Collection Historique, série in-8/Gemeentekrediet van België, Historische Uitgaven, reeks in-8) 65 (Brussels, 1985): 605-631.

¹⁹ The Ghent War has attracted the attention of a number of historians. Early attempts to offer a summary include Ph. Blommaert, *La guerre de la ville de Gand contre le duc de Bourgogne* (Ghent, 1841) and H. Kervyn de Lettenhove, *Histoire de Flandre*, vol. 4 (Brussels, 1849), pp. 350-497. More recent studies include Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good* (New York, 1973), pp. 303-333; Boone, *Gent en de Bourgondische hertogen*, pp. 226-235; and the unpublished study of Michèle Populer, "La propagande dans le conflit de 1447 à 1453 entre Gand et Philippe le Bon," M. A. Thesis (Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1990), summarized in her "Le conflit de 1447 à 1453 entre Gand et Philippe le Bon: Propagande et historiographie," *Handelingen der*

In the peace that followed Ghent's crushing defeat, the city's ruling elite lost much of its political autonomy and many of its symbols of rightful association. On July 30, 1453, Philip the Good publicly humiliated the Ghentenaars when he visited the city, forcing all the town's prominent leaders to kneel bareheaded and barefoot, like common criminals, before him outside Ghent's walls. The victorious duke also forced guildsmen to surrender their banners--now symbols of illegitimate activity.²⁰ In 1458, when Philip revisited Ghent, its prominent guildsmen and guild deans met the duke outside the Waalpoort, and reenacted in part the ritual submission which ended the Ghent War. Bareheaded but magnificently dressed, the city's guildsmen ushered Philip into Ghent as a conquering lord, genuflecting with torches as he entered the city.²¹

The Politics of the Welcome

Despite the extraordinary show of abasement that the Ghentenaars performed in 1458, Burgundian leaders, both before and after the entry, remained suspicious of the city's townspeople. In negotiations at Bruges between Ghent's leaders and Burgundian officials prior to the 1458 entry, Philip the Good's men feared that "the entry could be dangerous for the duke."²² Even after long reassurances by the Ghentenaars, and the promise of money if the duke entered, court officials remained skeptical; in fact, reports that Ghentenaars were barricading streets in preparation for the entry so

Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent (HMGOG) 44 (1990): 99-123. Victor Fris produced numerous articles and editions of documents about the conflict. See his "Een strijd om het dekenschap te Gent in 1447," *Bulletijn van de Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* (BMGOG) 11 (1903): 74-89; "La conspiration de Pierre Tyncke à Gand en 1451," *BMGOG* 13 (1905): 121-26; "Oorkonden betreffende den opstand van Gent tegen Philips den Goede," *HMGOG* 4 (1902): 55-146; "Nieuwe oorkonden betreffende den opstand van Gent tegen Philips den Goede," *HMGOG* 7 (1907): 179-220; "Bewijsstukken betreffende den opstand van Gent tegen Philips den Goede," *BMGOG* 22 (1914): 333-453; "La bataille de Gavere, 23 juillet 1453," *BMGOG* 18 (1910): 185-233; and his evaluation of the vernacular sources available to study the war, "Onderzoek der bronnen van den opstand der Gentenaars tegen Philip den Goede, 1449-53," *BMGOG* 8 (1900): 212-43.

²⁰ For descriptions of the ceremony, see *Dagboek van Gent*, vol. 2, p. 178; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, pp. 210-11; Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 2, pp. 389-90; Olivier de La Marche, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, pp. 330-32; Jacques Duclercq, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, ed. F. de Reiffenberg (Brussels, 1823), pp. 147-49.

²¹ On the welcome outside the Waalpoort, see *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 214.

²² Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 3, p. 406.

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

frightened the Dauphin of France that he urged the duke to cancel his plans, fearing an insurrection.²³

Court officials exercised the same caution when they planned the duke's entry into Ghent in 1467. On the eve of Charles the Bold's entry, Burgundian representatives summoned ambassadors from Ghent to interrogate them because, as Georges Chastellain observed, "this city of Ghent, from former times, is very dangerous; its people, by natural influences there, are much to be feared."²⁴ Charles the Bold, like his father, was worried in particular that the legacy of Ghent's defeat in 1453 might provoke trouble. In fact, officials at court heard rumors that town officials might use the entry ceremony to pressure the duke to rescind the humiliating treaty imposed on Ghent after the war.²⁵ But the success of the 1458 entry, its invocation of submission and reconciliation, ultimately convinced Charles of Ghent's fidelity. The new duke confidently rode into the city on Sunday June 28, 1467 after Ghent's aldermen reported a calm mood there.

Charles and his retinue entered Ghent at the Percellepoort, leading to the seignury of the Saint Pieter's abbey south of the city's center. It was the traditional gate of entry for the Burgundian dukes. Ghent's aldermen rode outside the Percellepoort on horseback to welcome Charles; the city's religious community, including all major orders, followed on foot, with guildsmen and guild deans behind them.²⁶ Mathijs de Grootheere, a prominent city lawyer, personally greeted the new duke, and praised the sagacity of his deceased father. The ducal party then entered Saint Pieter's seignury with 784 Ghentenaars, formerly banished for past misdeeds, whom Charles the Bold had pardoned.²⁷

Trumpeters and minstrels greeted the duke with music and drama as he entered through the Percellepoort. After mass at Saint Pieter's abbey, and after the administration of the comital oath in parish church of Saint Jan, Charles made his way to the Vrijdagmarkt, passing the city's Belfry and its town hall, both hung with black wool cloth. Once on the market place, Charles entered the prominent Tooghuis and appeared at its window, as was customary, to hear the citizens, men and women alike, assembled below him

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 408-09.

²⁴ *Ibid*, vol. 5, p. 249.

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 250-51.

²⁶ Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," p. 414; *Dagboek van Gent*, vol. 2, p. 205.

²⁷ Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," p. 415; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 259, which gives a slightly lower figure of 543 for those banished, and mentions that Clays Bruggman, a Dominican friar, begged Charles to reopen the Percellepoort, closed since the war ended in 1453.

P. J. ARNADE

pledge their obedience.²⁸ Several aldermen, guild officials and patricians, departing from tradition, genuflected before the duke at the conclusion of the rally. The kneeling Ghentenaars beseeched Charles to restore Ghent's local political sovereignty and its control over Eastern Flanders that the city had lost following the end of the Ghent War.²⁹

Despite the aldermen's request and the feting that followed, Charles' entry differed considerably from the last two major visits by Philip the Good in 1453 and 1458. Although the ceremony had proceeded as expected, it lacked the citizens' extreme submission displayed in the former welcomes. Because it was an *joyeuse entrée* that began a new reign, Charles the Bold's welcome restored a ceremonial balance between city and court, with both parties demanding respect; the court, for the duke's new reign; the aldermen, for their traditional rights and privileges. But the duke's entry also hinted at problems lurking beneath the mutual homage. The city fathers, nervous about their restricted privileges, and burdened by a dramatic increase in local taxation to fund the war indemnity owed the court, wanted more than the duke was willing to offer: the full restoration of their political autonomy.³⁰

Burgundian public entries, like much of court ceremony, promoted a fiction of consensus and integration between townspeople and the dukes. It offered a pliable ritual format in which an urban community and the Burgundian court could dramatize their relationship to one another in order to clarify their respective political powers. Both in 1458, and in 1467, Ghent's aldermen and its guild leaders desired a public performance of peace in hopes of regaining what they had lost after the war in 1453. The former entry failed to achieve that goal. In 1467, both aldermen and the duke once again hoped for an untroubled ceremony; the duke, because it would set a standard for other cities at the onset of his reign, and the aldermen, because they still sought to regain a measure of local autonomy. But Charles the Bold and Ghent's political leaders had unwittingly committed serious errors whose consequences soon became apparent. The morning after Sunday's festivities, a riot erupted on the Vrijdagmarkt at the very same spot where citizens had legitimated the duke's new sovereignty a day earlier.

²⁸ *Dagboek*, vol. 2, p. 206 for the decorations. For the Vrijdagmarkt ceremony, see *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 258, and Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," p. 416.

²⁹ For the request, see *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 258.

³⁰ For the effect of the reparations, 200,000 golden ridders in 1453, increased to 300,000, but reduced in 1455, see Boone, *Geld en macht*, pp. 60-7, 71. The aldermen increased indirect taxes to meet the sum required, including taxes on cheaper beer and wine, and doubled a tax on firewood and the grain assize. Beside these new burdens, a massive and forced selling of rents financed much of the war reparations. As late as 1461, Ghent still spent half of its annual intake on the repayment of debts incurred from these sales.

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

The Revolt

Charles the Bold had entered Ghent on June 28, the day of the city's popular religious procession of the relics of the Irish saint Lieven, martyred, according to his *vita*, in the nearby village of Houtem, southeast of Ghent, in 658. With the exception of carnival, the summer procession of Lieven's relics to Houtem and back was Ghent's largest civic festival. It involved not only the official confraternity which led the procession and the powerful abbey of Saint Baafs east of Ghent which housed Lieven's relics, but thousands of citizens who followed the holy relics in a sacred celebration that mixed together worshipers from all social classes.³¹

Charles the Bold was unaware of the Lieven procession's centrality when he scheduled his entry for June, arrogantly assuming the priority of court ritual without fully comprehending Ghent's civic calendar. The local aldermen compounded the duke's blindness: they not only failed to warn the duke of his misjudgment, they also issued an ordinance to local pilgrims to restructure the Saint Lieven procession so as not to interfere with Charles' welcome on June 28. Fearing problems, the aldermen had ordered worshipers to leave Ghent a day earlier than usual, on Saturday, June 27, and to return on Monday, June 29, as was customary. The court chronicler Georges

³¹ The best sketch of the procession is by Trio, "Volksreligie," vol. 2, pp. 87-123. I would like to thank Dr. Trio for sharing his research on the Lieven procession. Other important considerations include, Temmerman, "Feesten," pp. 171-80 and C. L. Diericx, *Mémoires sur la ville de Gand*, vol. 2 (Ghent, 1818), pp. 391-403 who assembled some of the most important archival documents. The procession has further been discussed in Frans De Potter, "De St.-Lievensprocessie uit Gent naar Houtem," *De Vlaamsche kunstbode* 28 (1898): 5-17 and his "Schets", pp. 51-58; J. Gessler, "De aloude bedevaart naar Sint-Lievens-Houtem," *Oostvlaamsche Zanten* vol. 16, no. 3 (1941): 65-73; Prosper Claeys, "La procession de Hautem-St.-Liéven," in *Pages d'histoire locale*, vol. 1 (Ghent, 1885): 114-21. For bibliographic references, see Victor Fris, *Bibliographie de l'histoire de Gand depuis les origines jusqu'à la fin du xve siècle* (Ghent, 1907), p. 215 and for an archival overview of related magistral ordinances, see Henri Nowé, "Gentse voorgeboden op de St.-Lievensbedevaart," *Miscellanea J. Gessler*, vol. 2 (Deune, 1948): 967-70. The two best descriptive sources for the structure of the procession are the anonymous account by a Lille author in *Relation des troubles de Gand sous Charles-Quint*, ed. L. P. Gachard (Brussels, 1846), pp. 102-07 and the material contained in the accounts of the sacristan of Saint Baafs' abbey in Rijksarchief te Gent (hereafter cited RAG), Bisdom Gent, K10672, 1488-89 f. 6v-16v called to my attention by Paul Trio and Dr. Gyseling of the State Archives of Ghent. For a thorough discussion of the document, see Trio, "Volksreligie," vol. 2, p. 93 n. 249. For the statute of the St Lieven's confraternity, see RAG K8065 1r-7r and transcribed with overview in *ibid*, vol. 1, lxxii-lxxix.

Chastellain even suggests that the aldermen purposely delayed the entry by two days, thus causing the overlap with the Lieven procession.³²

In truth, however, lack of clear evidence makes it well impossible to determine whose judgement was poorer, the duke's or the aldermen's. Both were obviously willing to displace Ghent's greatest religious procession to accommodate the entry ceremony, and, clearly, neither sought a political rebellion, despite Chastellain's hint of a plot. For the aldermen, the success of the entry was absolutely critical since they were still without the political rights they had enjoyed before the Ghent War. Perhaps for that very reason the aldermen carelessly overlooked the history of disturbances which the Lieven procession had provoked. The court's demand for an immediate entry and the aldermen's desire to placate the duke both overshadowed the need to maintain the smooth running of Ghent's festive schedule. For the sake of expediency, court authorities and urban politicians ignored any structural problems their change in scheduling might cause.

But the usurpation of urban space at the expense of Ghent's most cherished procession upset the fragile political and cultural order among social classes within the city. It also complicated Charles the Bold's relationship with the city's aldermen. Philip the Good had been much wiser in his calculations. In 1458, he had entered Ghent on April 23, the feast day of Saint George, replete with symbolic meaning for both Ghent and the duke. The holy knight was the patron of the city's powerful confraternity of crossbowmen, whose members were a microcosm of Ghent's political elite. The duke himself, like his two predecessors, was enrolled in the confraternity as a member.³³ Thus Philip had shrewdly chosen a special time that reflected the ties that united Ghent's privileged guildsmen to the court.

Charles had done just the opposite. The Lieven pilgrims' response demonstrates the severity of the duke's mistake, and the collision of ritual times that ensued. Monday afternoon, angry pilgrims carrying Saint Lieven's relics reentered Ghent. Their mood was hardly serene. An astonished Georges Chastellain observed:

A group of lowlife and young brats carrying the saint, shouting and crying, singing and dancing, making a hundred thousand insults, all drunk.³⁴

³² *Dagboek*, vol. 2, p. 205. Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, p. 255.

³³ On the Saint George confraternity, see Frans De Potter, *Jaerboeken van der Sint-Jorisgilde van Gent* (Ghent, n. d.); Josée Moulin-Coppens, *De geschiedenis van het oude Sint-Jorisgilde te Gent (vanaf de vroegste tijden tot 1887)* (Ghent, 1982).

³⁴ Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, p. 254. In 1541, an observer of the procession from Lille noted a high number of young men. See Gachard, ed.,

RITES OF REBELLION IN THE GHENT ENTRY OF 1467

Armed and menacing, "all these young rude folks," headed towards the Koornmarkt in central Ghent, where, using the reliquary of the saint as a blunt instrument, they smashed a hated tax booth to pieces. Emboldened by their success, the protestors rushed toward the Vrijdagmarkt, shouting denunciations of the city's aldermen, whom they accused of using war reparations as an excuse to overtax basic foodstuffs.³⁵

Chastellain suspected a conspiracy, and describes how the protestors had secretly prepared guild banners, which they unfurled when reentering Ghent.³⁶ One local account, *The Diary of Ghent*, offers a slightly different, but much more revealing, explanation, and one more in step with the course of political events. Ghentenaars in the procession, lacking the guildsmen's typical symbols of association since 1453, simply borrowed another equally cogent one: they hoisted the cloth that draped the saint's reliquary and marched beneath it to the Vrijdagmarkt.³⁷ Once established on the market place, the pilgrims reclaimed the previous day's ducal space as their own. The assembled crowd began to grow, and Charles the Bold and Ghent's aldermen were forced to react immediately to prevent an armed takeover of the whole city.

The rebellion of the Saint Lieven pilgrims proceeded so rapidly and so successfully in its early hours in part because the saint himself, and his veneration, carried such significance in Ghent. If the duke could shower his city with aristocratic charisma, the holy power of Saint Lieven, when contested, proved a mighty competitor. One astute observer of the procession three-quarters of a century later, writing down in 1541 what he had seen a year earlier, noticed that the boisterous enthusiasm inspired by the devotion to Lieven could easily spill over into the political arena.³⁸ Indeed, as Victor Turner's work on religious processions reveals, group participation in sacred activity often suspends established patterns of behavior, which in turn temporarily transforms social and psychological identities, and creates the potential for change.³⁹

Relation des troubles, p. 106. The possibility that youth dominated the festivity adds a generational dimension to the conflict.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 259-61; Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," pp. 416-17. City aldermen collected the *cueillote* at this tax booth, a hated levy upon food, drink and other primary necessities, such as fuel. For an overview of the post-1453 *cueillotes*, see Boone, *Geld en macht*, pp. 146-52.

³⁶ Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, pp. 253, 261

³⁷ *Dagboek*, vol. 2, p. 207. Religious objects commonly legitimated political actions in late-medieval European culture. For Renaissance Florence, see Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, esp. pp. 54-73.

³⁸ Gachard, ed., *Relation des troubles*, vol. 1, p. 106.

³⁹ Victor Turner, "The Center Out There: Pilgrim's Goal," *History of Religions* 12 (1972): 191-230, and more generally, his *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (Ithaca, 1974).

P. J. ARNADE

In fact, Ghent's local leaders most feared the Lieven procession's potential of fostering new social relations. For the visitor from Lille who wrote about the procession in 1541, it was a time of heightened disorder, a drunken debauchery masquerading as holy business. Having watched the returning pilgrims encircle the Vrijdagmarkt three times with Lieven's relics, the writer observed that the crowd fancied itself in control of city space. He recognized the procession around the Vrijdagmarkt as the most dangerous moment of the two-day celebration, and rightly so, because controlling this central square was a traditional venue in Ghent to foment rebellion:

And, with all the evil and sin that is committed during the pilgrimage, there is one other danger that many good people fear and hope will not occur then. When the majority of the common people of Ghent are heated-up and restless there is the danger that, entering Ghent thus, yelling and crying with the saint's body, they are always inclined to rebellion when they are upon the central Vrijdagmarkt, which they circle three times, running with the reliquary, and shouting like men without any sense, any memory, any understanding
... "40

The importance of the Saint Lieven procession was well established in Ghent before 1467, and others besides the Lille visitor had publicly criticized its profane behavior. The growth of the devotion to Saint Lieven in Ghent developed out of an eleventh-century competition over relics, and the prestige to command them, between Saint Pieter and Saint Baafs, the two Benedictine abbeys that flanked Ghent to the south and east respectively. According to the eleventh-century *Translatio Livini*, Saint Baafs' abbey acquired Lieven's relics in 1007, not long after it took possession of the village of Saint-Lievens Houtem in 976. It was shortly thereafter that the annual procession of his relics attained considerable importance.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Gachard, ed., *Relation des troubles*, vol. 1, p. 106, "Et, avec tous les maux et péchiez que on faisoit oudit pèlerinaige et voiaige, y avoit encoires ung autre dangier, lequel plusieurs gens de bien crémoient et doubtoient tousjours fort qu'il n'avienst cedit jour, que lors la pluspart du commun peuple de la ville de Gand estoit ainsi eschauffez et esmeuz, lequel dangier estoit que, à rentrer en la ville ainsy courant, cirant et huant avec ledit cors saint, ilz estoient tousjours assez enclin à faire quelque commotion, eulx estans sur le grant marchié des Vendredys, à l'entour duquel ilz tournoient par trois fois, courans avec ladictte fiertre, et crians comme gens sans aucun sens, ne mémoire, ne entendement"

⁴¹ Fris, *Bibliographie de Gand*, vol. 1, pp. 34-36; Trio, "Volksreligie," vol. 2, pp. 74-77, 87-89. On the development of the two Benedictine abbeys, see the recent summary of the large literature by Adriaan Verhulst and Georges Declercq, "Het vroegmiddeleeuwse Gent tussen de abdijen en de grafelijke versterking," in Gent, ed. Decavele, pp. 37-59.

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

The procession of Lieven's relics from the abbey of Saint Baafs to his chapel at Houtem and back the following day, June 28-29, commemorated the abbey's acquisition of Lieven's holy remains and coincided with an important regional fair held annually in Houtem. The visitor from Lille estimated that one-third of Ghent's population participated.⁴² The procession's official organization, however, devolved upon abbey officials and members of a local confraternity named in honor of the saint.⁴³ Incorporated in 1283, but probably older than its legal endowment, the Saint Lieven confraternity was a guild-based and mixed sex corporation, whose members, according to the fifteenth-century sacristan Henrik d'Hooge, included boatmen, brewers, shipmakers, coverlet weavers, fishmongers, wool weavers, coopermakers, and shiploaders.⁴⁴

Preparations at Saint Baafs for the procession began on June 25, the feast day of Saint Eligius, when monks' "woke up" the saint, thereby setting into motion a series of private celebrations within the abbey's community. On the afternoon of June 27, members of the Lieven confraternity arrived at the abbey, circling its walls in a procession before entering. At midnight, after the Benedictines and the confraternity brothers honored their ritual union with an evening meal, a priest celebrated midnight mass in the crypt of the abbey's church. At its conclusion, monks opened the abbey church's door, and throngs of city pilgrims entered to hear a public mass.⁴⁵

The early-morning mass brought all worshipers together, and created the appropriate ritual unity to allow the procession to begin. Carrying Lieven's relics, monks left Saint Baafs' abbey followed by the abbot himself and magistrates of Saint Baafs' village. At the Jorispoot, the village's principal gate, the Benedictine community officially surrendered the relics to the confraternity brothers and to the host of worshipers gathered there. The fishmongers, prominent members of the Lieven confraternity, stood at the front and back of the reliquary. Once situated, the confraternity members

⁴² Gachard, ed., *Relation des troubles*, vol. 1, p. 104.

⁴³ For the statute, see RAG, K8065 f. 1r-5r; also transcribed in Trio, "Volksreligie," vol. 1, lxxii-lxxix.

⁴⁴ See *Een exstract uuten brieven van wylen H. Heynderic d'Hooge, oude costere, gescreven up de zelven*, in Phillippe A. G. Kervyn de Volkaersbeke, *Les églises de Gand*, vol. 1 (Ghent, 1857), p. 320. The sacristan is mentioned in Ghent's city accounts in 1452-53, paid 2 pound groot, along with a Lieven Van Hauwaert, for their help during Saint Lieven festivities; see SAG 400/17 327r. The Saint Lieven confraternity's statute was reconfirmed in 1438, and the brotherhood divided into "inside" and "outside" chapters. In all likelihood, this division reflected those members who lived within the village of Saint Baafs, and those who lived outside its seignury. For a discussion of the division, see Trio, "Volksreligie," vol. 3, pp. 336-42.

⁴⁵ RAG K.10672, f. 6v-8v. See also the excellent summary in Trio, "Volksreligie," vol. 2, pp. 96-111.

P. J. ARNADE

began the twenty-kilometer procession southeast to Houtem, leading a group that included young monks, representatives from the magistrates of Ghent and Saint Baafs, and thousands of pilgrims, armed with flags, candles, torches, and musical instruments.⁴⁶ On route to Houtem with the saint's relics, the procession passed through central Ghent. It crossed the Leie through the Jorispoort and headed into the center of the city via the Steendam, exiting to Houtem through the Keizerpoort southeast of the city's center, to return through Ghent the next day before winding up at the abbey.⁴⁷

Ghent's magistrates, though they contributed almost no money to defray the procession's costs, recognized its centrality. When pilgrims returned to Ghent with the saint's relics after an overnight stay in Houtem, the city's bailiff and a delegation of aldermen greeted the procession before it entered city space through the Lievenspoort.⁴⁸

Yet despite the supervision of the city's aldermen, the procession proved troublesome. In 1301, for example, pilgrims had come to blows with "rural men and others" on their way to Houtem.⁴⁹ The Lieven procession's reputation for boisterousness prompted Ghent's aldermen in 1337 to send two magistrates with it "in order to assure that no unrest might result."⁵⁰ By 1412 the aldermen of Ghent had experienced enough problems to decree that all pilgrims had to proceed "peacefully and in an orderly manner without provoking any fights or disputes," ensuring that no one was thrown "in garbage", nor would alter any customary practices which "might provoke rumors and unrest inside the city of Ghent, both coming and going with the aforementioned saint."⁵¹ In November 1414 the Bishop of Tournai purified the church of Saint Baafs' abbey, complaining that the unruliness of pilgrims

⁴⁶ RAG K. 10672, f. 9r-v. See also Gachard, ed., *Relation des troubles*, pp. 103-04.

⁴⁷ The route can be partially ascertained in RAG K10672. See also Trio, "Volksreligie," vol. 2, pp. 104-05 and Temmerman, "Feesten," p. 172 who gives incorrect information about the annual route of the procession.

⁴⁸ Trio, "Volksreligie," vol. 2, p. 109 and Gachard, ed., *Relation des troubles*, vol. 1, p. 106.

⁴⁹ See *Annales Gandenses*, ed. Fr. Funck-Brentano (Paris, 1896), p. 15.

⁵⁰ Trio, "Volksreligie," vol. 2, p. 92 and SR 1336-37 and 1340-41 in *ibid.*, n. 247.

⁵¹ SAG 108, no. 2 f. 32v, "Wij gebieden dat alle deghene die devocie hebben ende in meenighe zijn met Sente Lievine tHoutem te treckene, hemlieden paisivelic ende gheordinerdelic draeghen zonder ennighe empeersheede ofte parlement te makene, nochte niement in trecten ofte inct vule en draghe, nochte eenighe neuwichede in en bringhe daerof dat rumoer ofte onruste binner der stede van Ghend ghescepen ware te commen, gaende ofte keerende metten vornoemden Sant, die de contrarie dade, scepenen soudene also castien dat hi exempel ende spiegelhel sijn soude andere hemlieden van gheliken te wachtene."

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

during the Lievin procession had contributed to "the spilling of blood and of seed."⁵² His complaint was lacking in effect, it seems, since by 1442 a sermon preached under the bishop's orders in the parish church of Saint Jacob "in the vulgar tongue" denied rumors that pilgrims had been excommunicated for improper behavior during the procession.⁵³

The anonymous Lille critic, reflecting in 1541 on more than two centuries of trouble caused by the procession, lambasted it as "a pilgrimage more of malediction than devotion," a profane time when female worshippers were lucky to avoid rape.⁵⁴ Despite his censorious tone, the visitor understood well the connection between the saint's popularity and Ghent's civic world. So too did the fourteenth-century Ghent poet Boudewijn Vander Luere, whose poem *The Virgin of Ghent* describes how the sacred authority of at least twenty-five saints, including Lieven, contributes to Ghent's mightiness. Discussing an image of a Virgin, representing Ghent, sitting in an arbor (*prieel*), Vander Luere explains that the arbor symbolizes Ghent's market place, and that "the saints join to protect the city."⁵⁵ On April 4, 1452, the eve of the outbreak of armed conflict between Ghent and the Burgundian court, the city's ruling captains proved Vander Luere's point: they mobilized Lieven's relics for a city-wide procession to avert war and save Ghent.⁵⁶ Clearly, then, Lieven's sacrality, and the procession in his honor,

⁵² Text in Charles Diericx, *Mémoires sur la ville de Gand*, vol. 1 (Ghent, 1814) p. 392, n. 1, ". . . quod ecclesia dicti monasterii, si, et in quantum ad praesens, effusione sanguinis, aut emissione seminis, vel aliter fuerit aut sit, per concursum populi, ibidem diebus festorum Sanctorum Bavonis, Macharii et Livini ac aliorum, in maxima copia seu quantitate confluentium, polluta, et reconciliatione indigeat"

⁵³ Text in *ibid*, vol. 1, pp. 399-401, n. 1, "Quamvis ex aliquorum malo intellectu, per aliquot annos, aliqua vulgaris fama volavit quod omnes transeuntes cum Beato Livino versus Hauthem sunt excommunicati, vel possunt excommunicari, illa tamen fama non est vera, si de justa excommunicatione intelligatur. Secunda propositio: devote transeuntes cum Beato Livino versus Hauthem non possunt juste excommunicari. Tertia propositio: quod sacrum corpus Beati Livini omni anno portatur versus Hauthem, ac etiam in vigilia apostolorum Petri et Pauli, et in festivitate apostolorum reportatur, plus quam aliis diebus, non est sine rationabili causa, ac licite et virtuose potest fieri. Quarta propositio: si aliquis transiret cum Beato Livino versus Hauthem in contemptum indulgentiarum cuiuscumque ecclesiae, aut e converso, tunc indevote procederet ac peccaret, et posset excommunicari ab illo qui potestatem haberet eum excommunicandi."

⁵⁴ Gachard ed., *Relation des troubles*, vol. 1, pp. 106-7.

⁵⁵ See J. Reynaert, "Boudewijn Vander Luere en zijn 'Maghet van Ghend,'" *Jaerboek van De Fontaine* 31 (1981), pp. 119-20; pp. 126-27 for the relevant passage.

⁵⁶ *Dagboek*, vol. 2, pp. 11-12, and SAG 400/17 f. 169v.

affected both how Ghentenaars perceived their civic culture and how they conducted their political life.

Negotiation and Reconciliation

The revolt of Lieven's worshipers on June 29, 1467 resulted from the careless joining of two ritual times, ducal and civic. But the conflict over ritual priorities in itself was not the only condition that gave rise to an armed rebellion. The very nature of both the joyous entry and the Lieven procession offered pilgrims suitable forums to air grievances; the former because it was a traditional vehicle to issue urban demands, the latter because its symbolic activity altered the usual social boundaries for its duration by mixing rich and poor, young and old, women and men together. Once on the Vrijdagmarkt, the worshipers manipulated both Lieven's relics and public space to buttress their legitimacy. Installed on the traditional spot in Ghent for rallies, and commanding the sacred power of Saint Lieven, the protestors refused to disband. Instead, they demanded Charles the Bold's attention.

Now upstaged by the very celebration they had tried to control, neither the duke nor the aldermen knew how to respond. Charles the Bold, advised of the insurrection while at court in Ghent, immediately wanted to confront the protestors, because, as Chastellain remarked, "it seemed to him that this indeed was a strange and difficult entry."⁵⁷ But Lodewijk Gruuthuse, a close Flemish advisor to the duke, advised caution, warning him that "your life and ours rest upon your careful behavior."⁵⁸ Chastellain reports that the duke heeded Gruuthuse's sage advice, and sent him in his place to the market place. But two Flemish accounts both dispute Chastellain's chronology, claiming that it was in fact Charles who first arrived on the Vrijdagmarkt.⁵⁹

Whoever appeared first, both Charles and Gruuthuse addressed the assembled crowd within hours of one another. Gruuthuse, a Fleming in service of the court, hoped to reconcile the protesters rallying around Saint Lieven's reliquary with the duke's men. He chastised the Ghentenaars for

⁵⁷ Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, p. 262.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 263. The Gruuthuse family enjoyed a long history as close advisors to the Burgundians. Lodewijk's grandfather served as a negotiator between Louis de Male and Ghent in 1382, and his father was a top counselor to Philip the Good. Lodewijk himself was knighted for his participation in the Ghent War, and became a member of the prestigious Order of the Golden Fleece in 1463. See Alphonse Wauters, "Les seigneurs de la Gruythuyse," *Biographie Nationale*, vol. 8 (Brussels, 1885): 381-90.

⁵⁹ Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, p. 263 on Gruuthuse; for the reports that suggest a different sequence of events, see Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," p. 417; and *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 260. See also *Dagboek*, vol. 1, p. 207. Van de Letuwe noted that the duke had sent two trustworthy men, Jan Petitpas and Rykewaet Uutenhove, before him to test the waters.

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

burdening a "good, debonair and honest" young prince with their complaints. The crowd responded that it was not the duke who was the object of its vituperation, but the greedy aldermen who had overtaxed citizens to enrich their own pockets.⁶⁰ Gruuthuse had argued that an entry ceremony was not a suitable occasion to riot because it was a time to honor the duke. The protestors, cleverly, did not reject this point, but instead seized upon its logic to appeal to the duke's legal obligation to protect them, a promise Charles had sworn a day earlier, and a political pillar of the respect Ghentenaars owed him.

Charles' appearance, however, upset the delicate standoff between himself and the Ghentenaars, undermining Gruuthuse's mediation and any hope for a peaceful outcome. Marching onto the Vrijdagmarkt at the head of an armed troop of archers and knights, the duke, dressed in black and brandishing a sword, pushed through the crowd, shouting, "What are you up to? Who has inspired you bad people to revolt?" In his anger Charles even struck one passerby with his weapon, knocking him senseless. Gruuthuse was so disturbed by this display of recklessness that he immediately scolded the duke, reminding him that "our lives and yours hang on a thread."⁶¹ He urged the duke to act calmer, "in order to save your life and your honor."⁶²

Members of the boatmen's, butchers' and fishmongers' guilds, prominent corporations in Ghent, escorted the duke through the market place to the Tooghuis to ensure his safety among the crowd. Chastellain reports that Charles addressed the crowd in Flemish, appealing to the protestors as "my children," and promising his support for their grievances.⁶³ But Charles' charitable mood changed considerably when a Ghentenaar, a certain Hoste Bruneel, described in one account as a "man-servant," upstaged him. Improbably, Bruneel had managed to enter the Tooghuis, and appeared beside the prince in its window. Facing the crowd, Bruneel demanded that Charles punish the city's aldermen, abolish the hated indirect taxes known as *cueillotes*, allow guildsmen to have their banners, reopen three gates that had been forced closed since the end of the Ghent War, and restore Ghent's political and legal autonomy that Philip the Good had restricted in 1453.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, pp. 264-65.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 266-67; cf. Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," pp. 417-18, who reports that the duke struck the bystander after he had addressed the crowd.

⁶² Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, p. 268.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-70. See also, Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," p. 418; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, pp. 260-61 which report the same.

⁶⁴ Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, pp. 271-72; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 260 which describes Bruneel as a "knecht." For the treaty of Gavere that concluded the Ghent War, see L. P. Gachard, *Collection de documents inédits concernant l'histoire de Belgique*, vol. 2 (Brussels, 1835), pp. 143-154.

Having failed to subdue the crowd on the Vrijdagmarkt, Charles departed in a furious mood, incredulous that a mere citizen had seized the initiative. The aldermen and many of Ghent's guild deans, also powerless to intervene, watched with a sense of resignation.⁶⁵ The protestors, in contrast, grew even bolder. Several tried to storm the city's Belfry to ring its bell, as they had done during the Ghent War to assemble crowds on the Vrijdagmarkt. Finding its entrance closed, several men entered the parish church of Saint Jacob, and sounded the church's bell. Many more city guildsmen responded to the call, and joined the other armed protestors on the market place.⁶⁶

The diverse crowd of Lieven pilgrims, laborers and rank-and-file guildsmen who swelled the Vrijdagmarkt, certain of their success, remained there overnight after Gruuthuse, returning to the market place, advised them to put their grievances in writing.⁶⁷ The following day Ghent's aldermen conferred with Charles the Bold and suggested that the only way to disband the rioters was to return their banners. Without banners, the aldermen argued, the protestors lacked the formal means to depart. The duke, desperate, consented, but the result was the opposite of what he had intended. Unfurling their banners for the first time in fourteen years and rallying around Lieven's reliquary, the Ghentenaars, now conjoining sacred and secular emblems of power, stubbornly refused to leave the Vrijdagmarkt.⁶⁸ By evening, an official delegation of city and court officials which included Gruuthuse, Claeys Triest, the bailiff of Ghent, Ghent's aldermen, and Jan Petitpas, the ducal secretary, arrived on the market place. Conceding defeat, they announced to the crowd that Charles the Bold had agreed to all of their demands except Ghent's control over its Quarter, a condition which a special court committee would later examine.⁶⁹ The crowd responded with jubilation. Rebellious citizens had not only successfully wrested civic space away from the duke and his ceremony. Equally significant, they had regained their right to banners, their secular emblem of authority, with the help of Saint Lieven,

⁶⁵ Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," p. 418; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 261; *Dagboek*, vol. 2, p. 207; Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, p. 272-73.

⁶⁶ This description is given by Charles the Bold himself in a letter dated July 1467 pardoning the Ghentenaars. See Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille, France (hereafter cited ADN), B1609, f. 30r-32v, also published in L. P. Gachard, ed. *Analectes historiques*, vol. 5 (Brussels, 1857), pp. 109-16; esp. p. 110 on ringing the bell. On assembling guildsmen during the Ghent War by sounding the Belfry's alarm, see *Dagboek*, vol. 1, p. 238.

⁶⁷ Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," p. 418; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 261.

⁶⁸ Gachard, *Analectes historiques*, vol. 5, p. 111. See also Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," pp. 418-19; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 262.

⁶⁹ *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, pp. 262-63; Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," pp. 418-19; Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, pp. 277-78. See also Fris, "Restriction de Gand," p. 64.

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

their sacred repository of power. Disbanding from the market place, scattered groups of protesters celebrated their victory by attacking another tax booth in central Ghent and smashing it to pieces; they then headed for the Spitaalpoort, a gate sealed shut since the end of the war in 1453, and forced it open. Meanwhile, members of the Lieven confraternity returned Saint Lieven's reliquary to the abbey of Saint Baafs now that his holy work had been done.⁷⁰

If many were rejoicing, neither the duke nor Ghent's aldermen were pleased. The ceremonial and political ambitions of the duke's entry had been checked, if not completely overturned. The French chronicler Philip de Commines, with great insight, had emphasized the importance of Charles' first joyous entry into Ghent. Other cities, Commines reasoned, would watch it carefully, in order to judge how to behave in their formal relations with the new Burgundian duke.⁷¹ Because of this attention to Ghent, Charles' entry was to have been the model, a quiet sequel to the Ghentenaar's spectacular submission in 1458. Instead, events proved that the pageantry of the previous Ghent entry, the stylized unity it suggested, was no more than a veneer. Even worse, Commines' prediction proved true, and mini-rebellions shook several cities following the disaster in Ghent.⁷² The 1467 *joyeuse entrée* proved disastrous on two fronts: it failed to create a single urban voice and, secondly, it brought two ritual times into direct confrontation.

Charles and his men departed Ghent on July 1, leaving behind a fractured community whose political leaders were deeply disturbed by the insurrection. True, the urban rebellion had forced Charles to grant concessions much desired by all Ghentenaars. But the aldermen and leading guild deans knew well that political relations between Ghent and the Burgundian court could proceed only if Ghentenaars resumed a subordinate position, and somehow exculpated themselves from what had happened. They were in a delicate position, trapped between the scorn of the duke and the radical politics of the city's rank-and-file guildsmen. Several aldermen and guild deans confronted Charles as he left Ghent, their request reflecting the difficulty of their position. They offered profuse apologies for the rebellion, but also pleaded with Charles to put his concessions immediately on paper to protect them from the wrath of the common folk.⁷³

⁷⁰ Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," p. 419; *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*, vol. 2, p. 263; *Dagboek*, vol. 2, p. 208.

⁷¹ Commines, *Mémoires*, vol. 2, pp. 119-20.

⁷² Richard Vaughan, *Charles the Bold: The Last Valois Duke of Burgundy* (London, 1973), pp. 9-10. There was trouble in St. Omer, Antwerp, Brussels, Leuven, and Mechelen.

⁷³ Van de Letuwe, "Rapport," pp. 419-20, who witnessed the city officials' request; Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, pp. 273-74;

But Ghent's elite knew that no amount of imploring would heal the rift that the rebellion had produced. Since civic ritual and its symbols had given city protestors the means to articulate their dissent, it would have to be ritual that provided the means to reconcile formally. On July 28, the duke issued Ghentenaars a pardon for their rebellion, officially reopening Ghent's three sealed gates, and once again allowing its citizens the use of guild and civic banners.⁷⁴ At the same time, Charles insisted on a ceremony of ritual repentance in which Ghent's political elite would pay for the insubordination of the lowly. The duke demanded that sixty-three leading townsmen kneel bareheaded before him and solicit his grace.⁷⁵ On August 8, 1467, four of Ghent's aldermen, its two head guild deans, and fifty-seven patricians and top guildsmen, divided into three groups of nineteen, submitted before the duke. Unlike the humiliation ceremony in 1453 which had taken place right outside Ghent's walls, Ghentenaars traveled to the ducal court in Brussels to abase themselves before top court officials.⁷⁶ Intense negotiations had proceeded this submission; delegations from Ghent had beseeched the duke's forgiveness, at one point arguing that "Ghent is not Sodom and Ghomorra," but instead a town ready to repent.⁷⁷

The shame of a humiliation ceremony outside Ghent on the court's terms and in the court's domain was balanced by the gains secured by Ghentenaars from Charles the Bold. True, the ritual censure of Ghent's aldermen and guild leaders was an especially painful reminder of the submission imposed on them by Philip the Good in 1453. What is more, forcing Ghentenaars to genuflect before the duke in Brussels underscored a mood of a defeat, for it denied townsmen their own meaningful space. In fact, the choice of the court for the reconciliation ensured that there would be no civic symbols save the Ghentenaars themselves. But in the eyes of Ghent's leaders, the weight of this burden of shame was matched by the political concessions the Lieven protestors had won for the city. Indeed, the revolt had secured the duke's promise to overturn the Treaty of Gavere's most cumbersome stipulations--something the aldermen themselves had failed to do. The Brussels' humiliation was a distasteful but highly effective means to restore Ghent's civic autonomy.

Many of Ghent's city leaders doubted, however, that the Burgundian duke would let them off so lightly. Serious unrest in Liège occupied Charles the Bold throughout much of the rest of 1467 and 1468, ending unhappily for the

⁷⁴ SAG 93bis/15, *kleine cartularia*, dated July 28, 1467.

⁷⁵ Gachard, *Analectes historiques*, vol. 5, pp. 109-115, from ADN 1609, f. 30r-32v.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 115-16.

⁷⁷ Chastellain, *Oeuvres*, vol. 5, p. 300. For the negotiations, see Fris, "Restriction de Gand," pp. 65-66.

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

city with its near destruction by the duke's forces in late October 1468.⁷⁸ Predictably, after the conclusion of the brutal Liège campaigns, Charles once again turned his attention to Ghent, now ready to throw his full weight behind punishing this errant city.

Ghentenaars needed no hints from the court about what to do, however. The aldermen had sent a messenger to attend the sacking of Liège on October 28 who had stayed long enough to witness the utter destruction. Terrified by what the messenger had seen, Ghent's political elite overreacted, quickly suggesting to Charles their own willingness to submit before his full sovereign authority. On November 22, they sent a delegation to Liège to congratulate the duke on his campaign there. On December 22, city representatives met in the Collatie, Ghent's deliberative body, and agreed to a series of anti-agitation measures, promising to relinquish guild banners, to close the three city gates opened after the revolt, and to punish severely any urban unrest. They admonished guildsmen in particular to avoid any armed gatherings or political protest, threatening torture, banishment, and the loss of guild membership. At the same time, they reminded all Ghentenaars—"men, wives, young and old"—that no one would escape the full measure of the law.⁷⁹

A second and more substantial humiliation ceremony at the Burgundian court in Brussels on January 8, 1469 capped the duke's tardy punishment of the Ghentenaars for their inversion of his entry ceremony a year and a half earlier.⁸⁰ Ghent's aldermen, fifty-three of its guild deans and some lesser jurors all gathered outside the court in Brussels on the Coudenberg square, forced to wait in the snow for over an hour and a half. Chronicler Olivier de La Marche and Pierre Bladelin, *maitres d'hôtel* for the Burgundian court, finally arrived to meet the Ghent delegation. They led the wet and cold Ghentenaars inside the court's central hall, now packed with prominent officials and over seventeen foreign ambassadors, and decorated lavishly with fine tapestries of classical rulers. Each guild dean carried an unfurled guild banner as he approached the central hall with other city officials. All

⁷⁸ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, pp. 11-37; P. Henrard, "Les campagnes de Charles-le-Téméraire contre les Liégeois, 1465-68," *Annales de l'académie royale d'archéologie de Belgique* 23 (1867): 581-678.

⁷⁹ For the chronology of event, see Fris, "Restriction de Gand," pp. 72-73, reconstructed from Ghent's city accounts; for the Collatie measures, see *Dagboek*, vol. 2, pp. 218-20. See also Despars, *Chronijcke*, vol. 4, pp. 46-47. Already by December 31, 1468, Charles the Bold had sent officials to Ghent to certify that the the three gates in question had been reclosed. See, ADN B1609, f. 21v-22r.

⁸⁰ For the best description, see "Relation de l'assemblée solennelle tenue à Bruxelles," in Gachard, *Documents inédits*, vol. 1, pp. 204-09; Comynnes, *Mémoires*, vol. 6, pp. 120-22; *Dagboek*, vol. 2, pp. 221-22; Wielant, *Antiquités de Flandre*, pp. 325-27; and ADN B1609 f. 33r-v.

Ghentenaars knelt thrice before entering, and carefully laid down their banners, crying "mercy," in unison, much like they had done after the Ghent War in 1453.⁸¹

Entering the grand hall, the humbled Ghentenaars saw Charles the Bold seated on an elevated throne magnificently covered with golden cloth. Charles immediately ordered his senior chancellor Pierre de Goux to shred Ghent's privilege of 1301, the bedrock of the city's right to self-governance, thereby annulling it forever before the full court.⁸² In a rare move, the duke then directly addressed the vanquished Ghentenaars; he complained about their two decades of misbehavior and denounced furiously their subversion of his entry ceremony in 1467. Charles had come to Ghent "to swear to maintain and respect its privileges," but city folks had responded by profaning his honor. His only choice, therefore, was to enforce their obedience, and to hope that they would henceforth promise to be "good people and good children."⁸³

In the wake of this second humiliation ceremony, Ghent lost all claims to political autonomy. Its patrician and guild elites were forced to witness the physical and symbolic laceration of their legal privilege that granted them power in a ceremony designed to etch indelibly in their minds the price of failing to prevent political unrest. In April 1469, Charles even restored the much maligned *cueillote*, and in August, he selected Ghent's aldermen without any participation of the local political elite.⁸⁴ With three of Ghent's gates reclosed and with the ritual surrender of banners, the city's guildsmen had once again forfeited some of their most powerful symbols. To these setbacks, Ghent's aldermen legislated further restrictions on the Lieven procession. They forbade pilgrims to carry the reliquary, and demanded that they place it upon a wagon, apparently to lessen actual physical contact with the saint's relics.⁸⁵

Banners and relics--the secular and sacred tools behind Ghent's rebellion--were casualties of the peace that followed. So too was the right to assemble unquestioned in public, and, generally, the right of Ghentenaars to control their own urban space. On May 20, 1469, the city pacified, duchess Margaret of York visited Ghent. Eleven days later Charles himself entered; city leaders feted him properly with gifts and guildsmen welcomed him with *tableaux*

⁸¹ "Relation de l'assemblée," pp. 204-07, which mistakenly gives the figure of fifty-two guild deans. SAG 400/22 f. 62v gives the correct number.

⁸² *Ibid.*, pp. 207-08.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁸⁴ Vaughan, *Charles the Bold*, p. 9; Fris, "Restriction de Gand," pp. 75-76.

⁸⁵ *Dagboek*, vol. 2, p. 224; *Memorieboek der stad Ghent*, ed. P. C. Van der Meersch, vol. 1 (*Maatschappij der Vlaamsche Bibliophilen*, vol. 2, no. 15), (Ghent, 1859), p. 276.

rites of rebellion in the Ghent entry of 1467

vivants. Ghentnaars even organized a water tournament on the Leie river in which guildsmen and those in the ducal retinue competed for prizes awarded for the best processional entries.⁸⁶

The ritual interaction between Ghentnaars and the ducal family expressed in these two entries helped to erase, but did not eradicate, the discord produced by the entry that had gone awry. The 1469 entries, following on the heels of two humiliation ceremonies, certainly restored the fiction of consensus these festivities aimed to create, but only at the expense of Ghent's public life. Burgundian entries into Ghent, as we have seen, were key moments in helping shape political relations between the court and the city, offering a formal means to articulate consent or discord, and providing a ritual format that spawned both conflict and reconciliation.

Still, historians of the late-medieval and early-modern entry ceremonies too often see these festive events as essentially descriptive. Entries, so it is assumed, merely reflect political and social life, and do so in a highly useful way; as cultural representations, they portray a community's ideal self-image.⁸⁷ By laboring to construct a harmonious portrait of the political groups which staged and manipulated entry celebrations, historians of European urban ritual routinely abstract ceremony from the realities of social and political conflict. The example of Ghent suggests that entry ceremonies were deeply embedded in the political process they represented, and were dynamic in both structure and function. Exactly because they dramatized political relations so vividly, entries became powerful tools in transforming social and political identities, offering a rare occasion to size up the status quo and even to seek change. Far from revealing civic unity, entries opened up the means among various urban groups to articulate conflicting goals and diverse interests.⁸⁸

Ghent's troubles in 1467 perfectly illustrate the plurality of political ambitions that entries tried to deny. The city's elites desperately sought to

⁸⁶ SAG 400/22 f. 39v for the duchess' entry; f. 41r-v, f. 81v, f. 88r-v for the duke's entry. See also *Dagboek*, vol. 2, pp. 222-23.

⁸⁷ This assumption is particularly evident in the works of Bryant, *The King and the City*, Guinée and Lehoux, *Les entrées royales*, and Jacquot and Kongison, *Les fêtes*. It is not hard to detect the structural-functionalist assumptions of such interpretations of ceremony. For the classic statement of functionalism, see E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (Oxford, 1940).

⁸⁸ The notion of crowd action as purposeful has long been assumed by social historians. See in particular, George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford, 1959) and his *The Crowd in History: 1730-1848* (New York, 1964). The divergent interests of the crowd, however, has often been overlooked. For a strong statement of this problem, see Suzanne Desan, "Crowds, Community, and Ritual in the Work of E. P. Thompson and Natalie Davis," *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Berkeley, 1989): 47-71.

P. J. ARNADE

flatter the duke but, in the end, were forced to pay for the transgressions of guildsmen and other city folk—including women, unpropertied laborers and youth—they were unable to police properly. The aldermen wanted to renew Ghent's political order by winning Charles' approbation, but mistakenly disrupted the city's civic calendar to achieve it. Guildsmen and pilgrims reacted by reasserting their claim to Ghent's streets and squares, and rested their political action upon the ritual efficacy of local emblems of power.

Most ceremonial entries of late-medieval and early-modern Europe proceeded without the serious mistakes committed by Charles the Bold and Ghent's aldermen. For that reason, perhaps, historians have too confidently assumed their passive function. Scholars have skillfully charted and catalogued the powerful symbols manipulated during entries, and read these ceremonies with the utmost care for what they reveal about the manifold parts of a political community. But if nothing else, the two-year long conflict that ensued between Ghent and the Burgundian court after banners, a saint's reliquary, and a ducal entry clashed demonstrates that symbols, like those who wield them, have a flesh-and-blood meaning behind them. Entries in late-medieval Flanders might have been crafted as testaments to unity but, in reality, they were no more stable than the urban communities that sponsored them.